

TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

BULLETIN

---

William J. Griffin, Editor

George Peabody College for Teachers  
Nashville, Tennessee

---

CONTENTS

Teachers and Preachers in the Old Southwestern Yarns .....	91
Some Folklore of Macon County, Tennessee .....	97
Identifications: Our Contributors .....	100
East Tennessee Question-and-Answer Tall Tales .....	101
Correspondence .....	103
Superstitions of the Missouri Ozarks .....	104
A Message from the Retiring President .....	109
A Short Bibliography of Brazilian Folklore .....	110
The Papaova .....	116
Report of the Annual Meeting of the Tennessee Folklore Society .....	120
News and Reviews .....	122

## TEACHERS AND PREACHERS IN THE OLD SOUTHWESTERN YARNS

by

James H. Penrod

Kentucky Wesleyan College  
Owensboro, Kentucky

The humorists of the Old Southwest, commonly designated as the Southwestern yarnspinners, were at their best in depicting the crudities, abnormalities, and comical traits of the less cultivated inhabitants of their region. They presented swindlers, pranksters, charlatans, braggarts, ugly men, dirt-eaters, and gouging fighting men with obvious relish and graphic art. In portraying the professional men of the Old Southwest, however, the yarnspinners usually consigned the more upstanding representatives of the professions to the role of "straight men." It was only when the professional men exemplified much the same traits as the frontier rogues and grotesques that they became notable characters. A consideration of some of the teachers and preachers appearing in the yarns will illustrate the tendency of the yarnspinners to single out the cruder, more unsavory professional men for comic treatment. In most cases the word "professional" is of doubtful application, but perhaps it will serve.

Perhaps nowhere did the yarnspinners fail more completely to create individualized characters than in their portrayal of members of the teaching profession. Although many of their character types have an indigenous flavor, the Southwestern humorists generally accepted the stereotype of the teacher in American literature as an eccentric, stern, dry individual almost completely devoid of humanity. Their disdain of teachers probably represented the prevalent attitude of the inhabitants of the old Southwest. As Arthur Palmer Hudson has remarked, "If, in the rougher, purely pioneer settlements, the schoolmaster was often regarded as one of the natural enemies of mankind, and every boy's hand was against him, in the older, more civilized places his lot must have been scarcely more enviable."<sup>1</sup> As evidence of the teacher's lowly social status, Hudson cites the statement by Joseph Holt Ingraham, a preacher and popular fiction writer of the time, that women teachers were never invited to dinner parties and never married gentlemen.

---

1. Arthur Palmer Hudson, Humor of the Old Deep South (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), pp. 386-387.

Among the yarnspinners, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet and Joseph G. Baldwin probably gave most attention to the teachers, but they too created stereotypes. The former described the annual custom in rural Georgia (actually one which was practiced in a much wider region) of locking the teacher out of the schoolhouse for a spring holiday. The teacher in Longstreet's story, Michael St. John, was perfectly aware of the plans of the boys, who were abetted by their parents; he was, in truth, not at all unwilling to give the boys their brief vacation, but custom required that he should appear on the morning chosen for the turnout and demand entrance, and the master played out his part manfully, only surrendering after going through the motions of trying to get in the schoolhouse. Longstreet's description of St. John's eccentric physical appearance generally conformed to the pattern made popular by Irving's Ichabod Crane; his sternness, however, was apparently more of a pose than a genuine trait.<sup>2</sup>

The stereotyped woman teacher appeared in a Baldwin yarn in the person of a highly prejudiced Yankee schoolmistress who "had come out as a missionary of light to the children of the South." For more reasons than one, this martinet was objectionable to the Alabama community which she was attempting to "civilize." Baldwin attributed to her the legendary physical unattractiveness of the members of her profession, declaring, "I do not mean to flatter her when I say she was the ugliest woman I ever saw--and I have been in places where saying that would be saying a good deal." So odious did she become in the village to which she had migrated that a plot was concocted to drive her away forever. Samuel Hele, the sharpest-tongued lawyer in town, was chosen for the task. Capitalizing on the Yankee schoolmistress' low opinion of the community, Hele casually described to her the horrible atrocities wrought upon whites and blacks alike in the village. He prefaced his discussion of the treatment of the Negro with this statement: "The way negroes are treated in this country would chill the soul of a New Holland cannibal."<sup>3</sup> From there he proceeded to describe the sale of Negroes and the torturing of slaves on plantation dungeon racks in the most palpably false manner, but his horrified auditor accepted his account as the strict truth. In the end the schoolmistress left town with celerity, meanwhile sending the information she had acquired about slavery in Alabama to Harriet Beecher Stowe.<sup>4</sup>

Baldwin made other incidental references to male teachers. One courtroom incident he mentioned briefly involved prosecution of a prankster who had poured buckshot into a Yankee schoolmaster.<sup>5</sup> In another sketch, the

---

2. Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, "The Turnout," Georgia Scenes (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1840), pp. 95-107.

3. Joseph G. Baldwin, "Samuel Hele, Esq.," The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi (New York: D. Appleton, 1853), pp. 290, 298.

4. Baldwin's Flush Times, published in 1853, appeared just one year after the publication in book form of Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. The latter work had been printed in serial form in The National Era, an abolitionist journal, in 1851.

5. Baldwin, "Bench and Bar," op. cit., p. 65.

transplanted Virginian, Tom Edmondson, was pictured as a victim of the "new country" in Alabama. Setting himself up as a schoolmaster, Tom was lured into a commercial venture called Choctaw Floats by swindlers more worldly-wise than he. Unlike the stereotyped teacher in physical traits, Tom still represented the conventional impractical pedant who always comes out with the short end of the stick.<sup>6</sup>

Elsewhere in the yarns the teachers were conspicuous more for their absence than their presence. Their chief function in the few sketches in which they appeared was to serve as victims for pranksters of all ages and all walks of life. Hardly any of them were natives of the Southwest. It was apparently assumed by the yarnspinners that teaching school, like peddling tinware, was the proper function of Yankees.

Among the professional men of the Old Southwest, the itinerant preacher was most frequently subjected to comic delineation. The strenuous life of the circuit rider received scant sympathy from the yarnspinners, who stressed the pedantry, hypocrisy, emotionalism, and ignorance of the backwoods preachers.

As might be expected, George W. Harris' Sut Lovingood made the most disparaging remarks about preachers. For example, he described the circuit rider who conducted a Negro night meeting as a "pimpilface, greasy collar'd, limber mouf's suckit rider."<sup>7</sup> Parson John Bullen, Sut's chief abomination, was a hypocritical, superstitious, mean-minded preacher who was not averse to selling whisky on the side. Clapshaw, Sut's rival for the affections of Sicily Burns, was another circuit rider whom the mountain prankster viewed with equal disfavor. Sut wryly remarked at one point that all circuit riders eventually became teachers of politicians.<sup>8</sup> At the dance given by Sut's friend, Bart Davis, a Hard-shell Baptist preacher "wif his mouf mortised intu his face in shape like a muel's shoe, heels down," put in an appearance. The agony suffered by this self-righteous old scamp in his efforts to remain aloof from the frivolities of the occasion was vividly described by Sut.

He got into a corner, an' commenced a'tchunin up his  
sighin an' groanin aperatus, a-shakin ove his head, an'  
lookin like he hed the belly-ake. He cudn't hev look'd  
more solemcoly ef his mam hed died that mornin a-owin him

---

6. Baldwin, "How the Times Served the Virginians," *ibid.*, pp. 96 ff.

7. George W. Harris, "Sut at a Negro Night Meeting," *Sut Lovingood's Yarns* (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1867), p. 160.

8. Harris, "Sicily Burns's Wedding," *ibid.*, p. 89.



two dullars an' a'alf. All these winin an' luvly souns an' moshuns were made on count ove the dancin, an' p'rap the cussin an' kissin. The whisky part ove that intur-tainment he'd nuffin against. I know'd that, fur every time he roll'd his eyes to'ard the barril, he'd lick his lips sorter sloppy like, jis' es ef he'd been dippin his bill into a crock ove chicken gravy, an' were tryin tu save the stray draps, what hung outside his face. Oh! he wer jis' a-honin arter that ball-face whisky; he'd a jis' kiss'd hit es sweet, an' es long, es ef hit hed been a willin gal.<sup>9</sup>

Simon Suggs, himself a country parson's son, shared Sut's cynicism about preachers. Observing the conduct of a highly emotional conductor of a camp meeting, the shrewd Alabama swindler remarked profoundly:

That ere feller takes my eyel--thar he's been this half-hour, a-figurin amongst them gals, and's never said the fust word to nobody else. Wonder what's the reason these here preachers never hugs up the old, ugly women? Never seed one do it in my life--the sperrit never moves 'em that way! ... Well! who blames 'em? Nater will be nater, all the world over; and I judge ef I was a preacher, I should save the purties souls fust, myself!<sup>10</sup>

The yarnspinners reveled in burlesquing the orations of backwoods exhorters. In the most famous of all the burlesque sermons, "The Harp of a Thousand Strings," the speaker revealed that, like Sut Lovingood's Hard-shell preacher, he loved "sperits." In his words: "Then thar's the sperits as some folks call liquor, and I've got as good artikel uv them kind uv sperits on my flat-boat as ever was fetched down the Mississippi River."

This boatman turned preacher was inordinately proud of his material possessions. In fact, he boasted of his earthly treasures and achievements in almost the same breath:

You see me here today, my brethering, dressed up in fine close; you mout think I was proud, but I am not proud, my brethering; and although I'm captin uv that flatboat that lies at your landing, I'm not proud, my brethering.

This mercenary evangelist displayed an abysmal ignorance of the Bible. In attempting to locate his text in the Good Book, he stated baldly, "You'll find it somewhere 'tween the fust chapter of the book of Generation, and the last chapter of the book of Revolutions."<sup>11</sup>

9. Harris, "Bart Davis's Dance," *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

10. Johnson J. Hooper, "The Captain Attends a Camp Meeting," *Simon Suggs' Adventures* (Americus, Georgia: Americus Book Company, 1928), p. 86.

11. Henry T. Lewis, "The Harp of a Thousand Strings," *Oddities in Southern Life and Character*, ed. Henry Watterson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1882), p. 483.

In another well-known burlesque sermon the same pattern was repeated. Again the preacher was an ignorant, mercenary flat-boat captain doubling as a Baptist preacher, this time boasting of the good Monongahela whiskey, flour, bacon, and potatoes he had stored on his boat.<sup>12</sup>

Biblical burlesques of the twentieth century are generally delivered by Negroes. Such was not the case in the Southwestern yarns. However, Harden Taliaferro included two Negro sermons in his Fisher's River Scenes and Characters which were probably accurate transcription of pulpit oratory he had heard in Surry County, North Carolina. Reverend Gentry, according to Taliaferro, preached sermons on "The Origin of the Whites" and "Jonah and the Whale." The text of the former was as follows:

Beloved bredderin, de white folks ar clean out of it when dey 'firm dat de fust man was a white man. I'm not a-gwine to hab any sich doctering. De fact is, Adam, Cain, Abel, Seth, was all ob um black as jet. Now you 'quire how de white man cum. Why dis-away. Cain, he kill his brudder Abel wid a great big club--he walkin stick--an God he cum to Cain and say, "Cain! where is dy brudder Abel?" Cain he pout out de lip and say, "I don't know; what ye axin' me fur? I ain't my brudder Abel's keeper." De Lord he gits in airnest, and stomps on de ground, and say, "Cain! You Cain! Whar is dy brudder Abel? I say, Cain! whar is dy brudder?" Cain he turn white as bleach cambric in de face, and de whole race ob Cain dey bin white ebber since. De mark de Lord put on de face ob Cain was a white mark. He druv him inter de land ob Nod, and all de white folks hab cum from de land ob Nod, jis as you've hearn.<sup>13</sup>

The humor in Rev. Gentry's sermon lay, of course, not only in the Negro dialect in which the sermon was couched. The rationalizing of the proud colored parson, the innocent irreverence of his adaptation of the Book of Genesis, and the fantasy of the black man turning white all contributed to the hilarity of the sketch.

It would be difficult to imagine a character less qualified to preach sermons than Sut Lovingood. Yet Harris's mountain rogue was nothing loath to become preacher. His sermons were of a decidedly secular flavor, however, both in diction and content.

On one occasion Sut employed the familiar pattern of the circuit rider's speeches in enumerating his five great qualifications for preaching:

---

12. William P. Brannan (?), "Where the Lion Roareth and the Wang-Doodle Mourneth," Tall Tales of the Southwest, ed. Franklin J. Meine (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930, p. 255.

13. Harden E. Taliaferro, "Rev. Charles Gentry," Fisher's River Scenes and Characters (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1859), pp. 188-189.

Fustly, that I haint got'nare a soul, nuffin but a whisky proof gizzard, sorter like the wust half ove a ole par ove saddil bags. Seconly, that I'se too durn'd a fool tu cum even onder millertary lor. Thudly, that I hes the longes' par ove laigs ever hung tu eny cackus 'sceptin only ove a grandaddy spider an' kin beat him a usen ove en jis' es bad es a skeer'd dorg kin beat a crippled mud turkil. Foufly, that I kin chamber more corkscrew, kill-devil whisky, an' stay on aind, than enything 'sceptin only a braod bottum'd chun. Fivety, an' las'ly, I kin git intu more durn'd misfortnit skeery scrapes than enybody, an' then run outen them faster, by golly, nor enybody.

Sut's sermon actually became a diatribe against tavern proprietors. The conclusion to his speech was not lacking in the sort of vitriolic eloquence which the backwoods spellbinder might achieve. The text of Sut's scrmon was clearly a parody of the Book of Exodus, particularly of the Mosaic laws.

Wharfore, stop not tu res' whar thar am a sign, fur thar aint res' onder hits shadder, neither sup wif a lan-lord, fur he's yer foe, but gird up yer coteail an' marvil funder, leas' yu lose yer soul a-cussin, an' hev yer paunch et intu a partridge net wif pisen. Keep the dus ove the dinin-room ofen your feet, an' the smell ove the bed-room ofen yer close, that yer days may be longer in the lan' what yer daddy's tuck frum the Injuns.<sup>14</sup>

Probably the most heroic circuit rider depicted in the Southwestern yarns was Reverend Stubbleworth, a genial, rugged Methodist preacher who pounded the fierce blacksmith, Ned Forgeron, to a pulp while blithely singing hymns to the accompaniment of his blows. Forgeron had made it his practice to whip all Methodist preachers who came his way, but after his thrashing by Stubbleworth, he resolved to become a good Methodist preacher himself.<sup>15</sup>

In summary, the preachers of the Old Southwest were generally pictured by the humorists of the region as hypocrites, charlatans, ignoramuses, or prigs. Sometimes they were well-meaning, sometimes purely selfish. They were more likely to be sickly than sturdy. A few stories were written, however, which emphasized the sturdiness and zeal of the backwoods preacher, who approached, in such instances, the strength inspired by purity of Tennyson's Sir Galahad.

---

14. Harris, "Sut Lovingood's Sermon," *op. cit.*, pp. 172, 179-180.

15. John B. Lamar, "The Blacksmith of the Mountain Pass," *Polly Peablossom's Wedding, and Other Tales*, ed. T. A. Burke (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson & Brothers, 1851), pp. 76-88.

## SOME FOLKLORE OF MACON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

by

Harry Law

Austin Peay State College

Macon County is one of the northern tier of counties in Middle Tennessee. It is located in the north-eastern corner of the Highland Rim. It is largely a plateau badly cut up by streams which have etched deep valleys into the plateau. This stream erosion leaves a great part of the county in slope with deep, narrow valleys bordered by steep hills. The northern half of the county drains through its creeks largely into Barren River. The southern half drains into the Cumberland River. The county is more or less isolated since it does not lie on any travel route between large cities. There are no navigable streams in the county and no railroad has ever crossed its borders.

The county was covered with timber, mostly hardwood, at the time the white man first settled. The county has no important minerals other than some limestone, water, sand and gravel, and a little oil. Settlers came largely across the mountains from Virginia and North Carolina. Very few, if any, people in the county owned slaves. So the county sided with the North in the Civil War and has to this day remained largely Republican. Early settlers did subsistence farming and exploited the timber for cash money. The early settlers were of ordinary pioneer stock.

People of this county have been since early days deeply religious. The Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians were the first religious groups to be organized. There were many divisions of the Baptists, as Missionary, Free Will, and General. The Church of Christ, or Disciples, came in later but grew rapidly in strength. Many, long and bitter were the debates between representatives of these denominations. Even now, rarely does a summer or autumn pass without its religious debate. At these debates people come by the hundreds, often bringing lunch for an all-day session.

Folklore of this county was not greatly different from that of other counties of the Northern and Eastern Highland Rim and Southern Kentucky. Much of this has already been written up, but my report depends wholly on my own memories. I have not had an opportunity to examine Lewis David Bandy's master's thesis on "Folklore of Macon County, Tennessee," (1940) which is on file in the Peabody College Library.

Most of the folksongs sung here were those brought in from Virginia, North Carolina, or some neighboring county and recorded in other collections. Serious ballads such as "Barbara Allen," "Put My Little Shoes Away," and others were frequently sung; so were the lighter ones as "Old Tom Wilson," "Old Dan Tucker," "Old Joe Clark," "Old Sam Simon," "John Henry," and "The Lonely Child."



Folkgames furnished one of the chief sources of diversion and pleasure for the young people. Often mature and even old people also enjoyed the play parties. In true pioneer spirit quilting parties, corn huskings, apple and peach peelings, bean and pea shellings, barn raisings, log rollings, and even clearings and grubbing were common occurrences. At each of these community gatherings at least one sumptuous meal was served, or if a night affair, cider, sweet and hard, California beer, and other homemade drinks with gingerbread or cookies were served. After the tasks, games were played. These were called play parties then, but now are called square dances, as the word "dance" had evil connotations and many parents would not allow their daughters to attend a "dance." These parties would usually close at midnight, as most of the participants and spectators would go to work early the next morning. If the affair was on Saturday night, it had to close at midnight as it was considered evil to continue into the Sabbath. People walked, rode horseback, or came in buggies. All couples and all girls were chaperoned.

In the early days the young people did their courting in the room with the old folks and other children. Occasionally the old folks and children retired to the kitchen until bedtime, which was usually 9 o'clock, rarely as late as 10. The young people enjoyed little privacy. They enjoyed semi-privacy as they walked to and from church and social gatherings. On such occasions they were accompanied at only a few yards distance by one or both parents.

Later, as houses were built larger, a special room known as the parlor was provided. Here couples did their courting. Close watch by both parents and other children was kept over courting couples. Standards of morality were very high. Separation was considered wrong and a widow by separation was considered immoral.

Doctors were scarce and money with which to pay them was scarcer. Much home doctoring was done and home remedies were many. To provide help in childbirth each community had one or more women who acted as nurse on such occasions. They got their rating by experience. They were called Granny Women and events of childbirth were called Granny Sprees. Many, weird, and unusual were the the remedies applied to both mother and baby by some of these people.

Some of the very common remedies for various ailments may be listed.

For boils and sores children were given water from a glass or bowl with rusty nails in it. For continuous appearance of boils water was given from a glass containing quick lime.

Angry sores were treated by allowing a dog to lick them.

Children wore asafetida around the neck to keep off diseases.

For rheumatism a buckeye was carried in the left rear pocket.

For croup children were given and their throats rubbed with melted strong grease.

Warts were supposed to be removed by rubbing them with a dishrag and burying the rag. When the rag decayed the wart went away.

A sty on the eye was removed by rubbing a small stone on the affected eye, and placing the stone at a fork of the road. The sty would go to the first person to walk over the stone.

For joint rheumatism, rendered fat from a skunk was rubbed on affected joints.

Tobacco juice was applied to insect bites.

For worms children were given a few drops of turpentine before breakfast; also candy made of molasses and worm seed or vermifuge.

To cure thrash a person who had never seen his father blew in the child's mouth.

A few drops of carbolic acid in each pail of drinking water was supposed to keep off typhoid.

For hives the baby was given ground ivy tea or catnip tea.

For boils a poultice was made of soap and onions.

A piece of fat pork was placed on a growing boil to bring it to a head.

Golden Seal, known as Yellow Root, was eaten for sore mouth.

Brown paper soaked in vinegar was bound around sprains.

Burned whiskey was given children for colic.

For bad colds children's feet were rubbed with warm mutton tallow and flannels with turpentine and tallow were placed on the chest.

Mint leaf tea was drunk for sick stomach.

For severe cases of congestion of the chest cavity people made a mixture of turpentine, lampoil, and camphor in a base of mutton tallow. They applied it on a flannel cloth placed on the chest.

It was thought that blood got thick in winter. To thin the blood in spring we drank sassafras tea.

To purify blood, tea made from alder bark and twigs was drunk.

Whiskey in which rock candy was dissolved was drunk for lingering or violent coughing.

Soot was applied to stop a wound from bleeding.

A sure-fire remedy to break out the most stubborn case of measles was the use of sheep manure tea.

Every community had its herb doctor. He gathered herbs, leaves, roots, bark, and the like, and compounded them and their juices in different ways for different ailments. Many miraculous cures were effected by these herb doctors.

Macon County, too, had its share of the weird tall tales. There were, for example, the ones about drunks, ghosts, strange wild animals roaming through the forests, the headless rider who mysteriously jumped on a horse behind a rider and just as mysteriously jumped off again as the rider neared a clearing, and the reports of sudden burning of gasses across an entire hillside without scorching the dried fallen leaves.

People in Macon County had their special customs. There was the custom of parents giving their son, upon marriage, a cow and a sow, and their daughter a feather bed and a dozen hens. One could tell where eligible daughters lived by the sudden increase of the size of the flock of geese. It was a custom to give every son who remained at home until his twenty-first birthday either a horse and saddle or a horse and buggy, depending on the financial status and inclination of the father.

Yet in spite of all this, or because of all of this, these upper Cumberland counties have produced such men as Judge Gardenshire, Cordell Hull, Albert Gore, and many others who have reached high places.

#### IDENTIFICATIONS: OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Four states are represented by contributors to this issue of the Bulletin. JAMES H. PENROD is Professor of English at Kentucky Wesleyan College in Owensboro, Kentucky. His earlier article on "Folk Humor in Sut Lovingood's yarns" appeared in our Bulletin in December 1950, and his study of "The Folk Mind in Early Southwestern Humor" was published in our June number this year. ....HERBERT HALPERT, a regular contributor and nationally known folklorist, is Head of the English Department at Murray State College, Murray, Kentucky. ....IDA MAE MCKINNEY, of Portageville, Missouri, was a student in Dr. John E. Brewton's folklore class at Peabody this fall....CHARLES F. BRYAN, formerly connected with Peabody, is now Director of Music Education at the Indian Springs Schools in Helena, Alabama....Our other contributors are residents of Tennessee. HARRY LAW is Professor of Geography at Austin Peay State College....EARL W. THOMAS, who has lived in Brazil and served there during the war is Assistant Professor of Romance Languages at Vanderbilt University ....C. P. SNELGROVE is Librarian at Tennessee Polytechnic Institute in Cookeville....BURTON H. BYERS is Assistant Professor of English and Speech at Peabody....FRIDA JOHNSON, a native of Virginia who has for two years served as President of the T.F.S., is an Associate Professor of English at Peabody....From another continent comes the author of "The Papaova." ARTHUR COELHO, a native of the Brazilian Northeast, now represents Paramount International Films. His translator, Raymond Sayers, teaches Portuguese at Columbia University. Mr. Sayers' book on The Negro in Brazilian Literature will soon be published by the Hispanic Society of America.

EAST TENNESSEE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER TALL TALES:  
A Folk Riddle Collection of Frances Boshears, Stearns, Kentucky

by

Herbert Halpert

Murray State College  
Murray, Kentucky

This past summer one of my folklore students, Miss Frances Boshears, a teacher in Stearns, Kentucky, turned in as riddle material the eight items given below. She learned them in Scott County, Tennessee, where she grew up. Two of the items, nos. 7 and 8, are "true riddles." The first half dozen, however, represent a curious pattern which has not been discussed in folklore journals.

Tall tales, though far better known in European folk tradition than most people realize, seem to have flourished with particular vigor in the United States, as innumerable collections testify. Such tales are also told in English in Newfoundland and western Canada; in French in Quebec; and in Spanish in Louisiana and New Mexico.

Stylistically the term "tall tales" has been stretched to include everything from the leisurely anecdote to the brief jest. As I have noted elsewhere: "Several scholars have pointed out that certain rhetorical patterns of humorous exaggeration are an integral part of tall tale humor as well as of the humor of comment on human behavior and appearance."<sup>1</sup> Of course, as Professor Mody C. Boatright has ably demonstrated, exaggeration alone does not make the tall tale.

There is one internationally-known "lying tale"--in which the blind man sees something, tells the deaf man to pick it up, and the naked man puts it in his pocket--that is occasionally told as a riddle.<sup>2</sup> I have never recorded a version of this. The only previous American report of a considerable group of riddling questions in this tall-tale pattern comes from South Carolina Negro school children:<sup>3</sup>

---

1. See "A Pattern of Proverbial Exaggeration from West Kentucky," Midwest Folklore, I (1951), 41. The references in that article are pertinent to the remarks in this paragraph.

2. For examples and references see Paul G. Brewster, "Folk-Tales from Indiana and Missouri," Folk-Lore, I (1939), 300; Elsie Claws Parsons, Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English (Memoirs of the American Folklore Society, Vol. XXVI, Part III), New York, 1943, pp. 312-13.

3. See J. Mason Brewer, Humorous Folk Tales of the South Carolina Negro (Publications of the South Carolina Negro Folklore Guild, No. 1) Orangeburg, South Carolina, 1945, pp. 27-30.



Miss Boshears' small collection demonstrates that the riddling question as a formal rhetorical device for brief exaggerations is known to whites as well as Negroes. Since only a scene is presented but no action, it is undoubtedly an exaggeration to call these "tall tales." I imitate Professor Brewer in using this title, however, as a means of calling attention to this curious form. I hope other collectors will report further examples.

Miss Boshears described how these riddling questions are used in Scott County: "Riddling questions are used mostly by adults, but sometimes used by older boys. They are used as good-natured fun in discussing the mountaineer, because they are mountaineers themselves. I have heard them used as a means of starting a group to telling tales . . . . One man will ask another one of these questions, and then if no one in the group answers, he answers himself. Usually others know the answer. That begins more stories and lots of laughter."

#### Riddling Questions

1. Do you know why the farmer builds a chute in his corn field?

Answer: To carry his corn to his wagon left in the bottom land.

2. Do you know why a mule wears stilts on two legs?

Answer: To be able to stand up on the hillside.

3. Do you know why the mule wears blinders on one eye?

Answer: To keep from becoming scared and falling or jumping down the hillside.

4. Do you know why a mule's legs are shorter on one side?

Answer: To stand on a hillside.<sup>4</sup>

5. Do you know why the mountaineer limps?

Answer: Because he was raised on a hillside.

6. Do you know why the long-whiskered mountaineer doesn't carry his lunch with him?

Answer: He has enough food in his beard.

---

4. For some references to the mythical "sidehill" beast with legs shorter on one side, see my note in the Journal of American Folklore, LVIII (1945), 24.

True Riddles<sup>5</sup>

7. What is it that is round, has hair all around it, and water comes out of it?

--Eye.

Compare Taylor No. 1425.

8. Black on the outside,  
Red on the in,  
Hoist your foot,  
And stick it in.

--Boot.

Taylor No. 1538. Compare the West Tennessee version I gave in the June issue of this Bulletin, p. 41, No. 53.

- 
5. Some riddles from eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina are given in Isabel Gordon Carter, "Mountain White Riddles," ibid., XLVII (1934), 76-80. Miss Carter does not indicate which items are from Tennessee.

-----  
CORRESPONDENCE

If variety is the spice of life, the Editor's mail in recent months has been quite spicy. From Helsinki, Finland, comes a request for the March, 1941, Bulletin. The Twentieth-Century Fox Studios in Beverly Hills, California, want help in determining the nature of the speech of Andrew Jackson and his Middle Tennessee contemporaries. Professor Benjamin Grosbayne is collecting "Songs sung by students about college life." READERS, TAKE NOTE! Professor Grosbayne's address is Department of Music, Brooklyn College, Bedford Avenue & Avenue H., Brooklyn 10, New York. Here is another letter:

Dear Sir:

For some time I have been engaged in some clinical research in the phantom limb phenomena as it occurs in amputees. From some of my patients I have learned some superstitions relating to phantom limb sensations but have been unable to locate any particular references in either medical, scientific, or folklore literature. I am especially anxious to learn of any superstitions relating to the phantom limb and secondarily, amputations. (Some folklore journals do have occasional references to superstitions about amputations but none relating to phantom limbs that I can locate.)

I would consider it a great favor if you would let me know any information you or your colleagues might have relating to this problem. If you know of any specific references either in your journal or in other sources, they would be of immense help.

Very truly yours,

Douglas B. Price, Capt., MC USA  
Apt. 205, Walter Reed Army Hospital  
Washington 12, D. C.

## SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MISSOURI OZARKS\*

By

Ida Mae McKinney

Portageville, Missouri

When in 1932 I went to Carter County, Missouri, to teach in a very small town, I soon began to realize that the people of the Ozarks were unique and that I had a rare opportunity in being able to study them. I was especially interested in their superstitions. At that time those with whom I came in contact were very superstitious. They amazed me at times with their weather signs, planting suggestions, and their numerous cures. I began to make mental notes of these.

The hillspeople firmly believe that certain individuals are endowed with the ability to foretell the future. When I was among them there was a Josie Forbes in Wayne County, Missouri, who was known as "the witch of Taskee." They went to her with all sorts of problems and firmly believed that she could tell them what their solutions would be. One man, a Mr. Tucker of Carter County, told me that a man who was trying to discredit Josie rode his horse to her place. Before reaching her house he took the saddle from his horse and put it in the corner of the fence. He rode on to Josie's house and had an interview with her. He told her he had lost his saddle and wondered if she could tell him where it was. According to Mr. Tucker, Josie answered, "Yes, your saddle is down in the corner of the fence, and you'd better go get it 'cause the hogs are eating it up!" Mr. Tucker believed the story and was convinced that Josie knew all.

Mr. McKinney, a native of the Ozarks, and I were going fishing one day. We stopped at a small store to buy provisions for a lunch. We were told that it was useless to go fishing on that day because "the sign is in the bowels." We went fishing as we had planned, but I must add, we caught no fish! The people of the Ozarks study their almanacs almost as religiously as they do their Bibles. The "sign" guides them in all their activities.

The Ozark folk have many superstitions about the weather, and they are rather skeptical about weather reports of the Weather Bureau. Activities of various animals are regarded as signs of rain. If a dog is seen eating grass or a cat licks its fur forward, rain is expected. When chickens stand with their backs in the wind so that their feathers are ruffled up, people say it will rain soon.

---

\*Editor's Note: Although much of what Mrs. McKinney reports is familiar to those acquainted with Vance Randolph's work, readers may find it interesting and useful to have a firsthand account of relatively recent observations of life in the Ozarks.

An abundance of flies or mosquitoes around the door is an indication of rain. When flies "bite" rain is sure to come. Dogs are always put out of the house during a storm because "dogs tails draw lightning."<sup>1</sup>

"If it rains on Monday there will always be two more rainy days during the week, but Friday will be clear."<sup>2</sup> Friday is either fairest or foulest. Of one thing the Ozark weather prophet is sure, "all signs fail in dry weather."

There is some disagreement among these people about "ground hog day." Some believe it to be February 2, others February 14. The latter date is generally accepted as the official ground hog day, however, by those with whom I was associated. On this day the ground hog is supposed to come out at noon; if he sees his shadow (that is, if the sun is shining), he goes back into his hole, there to stay for six weeks, which indicates six more weeks of winter.

Three months after the first katydid is heard the first frost is expected. I have heard many Ozark wives tell their husbands that in three months he would have to get up first in the morning and build the fire.

The moon is watched with much interest by the Ozark people. If there is a ring around the moon bad weather is expected. If there are stars in the ring each star represents one day before the approaching storm.

The Ozark farmer almost invariably plants his crop "in the moon." Those vegetables which grow underground (potatoes, beets, turnips, radishes) do best when planted in the "dark" of the moon. Tomatoes, beans, peas, and corn must be planted in the "light" of the moon. One farmer told me that he planted his potatoes one year in the light of the moon and they all went to vines! Hogs must be butchered in the light of the moon. "Most women claim that pork butchered in the decrease of the moon will 'all go to grease' and curl up in the skillet when it is cooked."<sup>3</sup> A good many Ozark women believe it is best to set eggs in the light of the moon.

To me, one of the most amusing of the Ozark superstitious practices is one designed to protect chickens from hawks. A Mr. Hicks of Carter County, Missouri, told me that his mother always kept a horseshoe in the fireplace to keep the hawks away from her chickens--the hot horseshoe burns the hawk's feet.

The children in the section of the Ozarks where I taught were very careful not to kill a toad, for they told me, "If you kill a toad, your cow will give bloody milk." I was also told by the children that if you wanted to keep a stray dog that comes to your house, trim one of your

---

1. Frederick Simpich, "Missouri, Mother of the West," National Geographic Magazine, LXIII (April, 1923), 431.

2. Vance Randolph, "Ozark Superstitions," Journal of American Folklore, XLVI (January, 1933), 16.

3. Ibid., p. 47.



finger-nails and put it in a biscuit. If the dog eats the biscuit, he will never leave. It is regarded good luck for a cat to take up its abode with an Ozark family. A good many families treat the animal with great kindness to induce it to stay.

To drop a dishrag means a visitor will come--and in most cases the visitor will be as dirty as the individual who drops the dishrag. Dropping a knife indicates a man visitor, a fork a woman.

An itching nose is another sign that visitors may be expected. The following jingle is usually quoted:

My nose itches, I smell peaches,  
Somebody's coming with a hole in his breeches.

There are many superstitions about salt among the Ozark folk. They "make sure that the salt shaker is full on New Year's Day, since this insures prosperity for the coming year."<sup>4</sup> Salt is never received directly from another or bad luck follows. If salt is spilled, some of it must be thrown over the left shoulder to break the spell of bad luck. It is considered bad luck to borrow salt; if it must be borrowed, it is never repaid. Salt must always be in its place in the house before any furniture is moved into the new abode of the family.

If one forgets something and must go back into the house he will have bad luck on his journey. I was told by the woman with whom I boarded that if I would sit down in a rocking chair and rock ten times I would break the bad luck. This I always did!

Laughing or singing before breakfast are signs of bad luck to come before night. Singing at the table is another bad luck sign. Most of the hill folk with whom I was associated would never begin a new task on Friday under the assumption that the job would never be completed or that some bad luck would result.

Some Ozark people are of the opinion that if a woman suddenly pulls a "runner" in her hose she has a letter awaiting her at the post office.

There were some among my associates in the Ozarks who firmly believed that cattle knelt at midnight on Christmas Eve. None ever told me, however, that he had seen this happen.

I was always served black-eyed peas and hog jowl on New Year's day to bring luck during the year. The activities of the day are supposed to indicate what one will do the remainder of the year. The first twelve days of the year are watched with interest for they foretell the weather of the next twelve months.

---

4. Ibid., p. 55.

The superstitions of the Ozark people regarding medicine were to me among the most interesting I found there. My attention was first called to them by the lumps of hard, yellow substance which many of the youngsters wore around their necks. I was told that wearing "asafetida" around one's neck would keep diseases away. Early in the spring my landlady made a tea of sassafras roots which we were all to drink. It tasted to me very much as furniture polish smells. I asked concerning its value. She told me it would "thin" the blood for the coming summer.

Kerosene was a very common remedy for sore throat and laryngitis. Mr. McKinney told me that his mother gave him a teaspoon of "coal oil" on numerous occasions when he suffered from tonsillitis.

To have a blister on one's tongue means that the sufferer has told a lie.

Miss Clemens of Springfield, Missouri,<sup>5</sup> relates that a sty was believed to be cured by rubbing a black cat's tail across it nine times. In the community where I taught, sore eyes were quite prevalent. The youngsters were very careful not to look directly at another with sore eyes, believing that their own eyes would become affected.

I have often heard the remark that a sick person should not be moved from one room to another, nor even from one bed to another.

One man told me that he suffered from cramps in his legs until he learned to place his shoes upside down under the bed at night. Since he learned to do this he had had no cramps. Others believe this procedure will also cure corns and bunions.

I have been told, although I have never seen anyone who had tried it, that asthma could be cured by boring a hole in a black oak tree at just the level of the top of the patient's head and placing a lock of his hair in the hole. As soon as the hair grows out to replace the missing lock, the asthma leaves the patient.

I have known many hill people suffering from rheumatism to carry a "buck eye" at all times, believing that it would cure or alleviate their suffering.

There are many ways to remove warts according to the Ozarkans. The most common in the section with which I am familiar is to "sell" the warts to someone who gives you a penny for them. If you keep the penny, the warts will disappear.

A bird which flies into the house brings an omen that there will be a death in the house. When a dog howls mournfully at night, some Ozarkans fear death for someone in the neighborhood.

---

5. See "Taking My Medicine," Atlantic Monthly, CLXI (February, 1938), 265.

Numerous other signs are rather commonly regarded as death omens. To carry a hoe into the house will cause a death in the family. If a picture suddenly falls from the wall, someone will die. Broken mirrors foretell bad luck and to many Ozarkans, death. Wood which burns with much popping and cracking indicates death for some member of the family. Certain people who were born with "a veil over their faces" are supposed to be able to sense death several days ahead of time.

In the home of one of my patrons, I was told that several years before, a young member of the family had passed away. The pillow on which the child had died was taken apart carefully and where the child's head had rested was found a cross. According to the family this meant that the child had gone to Heaven. Not to have found the cross would have indicated that the child did not go to Heaven.

Having been associated with teen-agers, I heard many superstitions pertaining to love and marriage. Cold hands indicate a "warm heart," and the possessor of cold hands is suspected of being in love. Girls whose second toe is longer than the big one, will "henpeck" their husbands. Many a girl will not take the last biscuit on the plate for if she does she will be an old maid. I learned that a girl must never sit on a table or let anyone sweep under her feet or she, too, will never get married. The girl who accidentally made rhymes always said, "I made a rhyme, I'll see my feller before bedtime." When a butterfly alighted on a girl's head she was supposed to change her sweetheart soon. If the yellow color of a butterfly reflects on one's chin, that person is jealous.

May 1 seemed to be a good day on which to see one's future husband. The most common method which I learned from the Ozark girls was to look in a spring before breakfast on the first day of May. There the girl would find the reflection of her future mate.

The Ozark bride is very careful of the selection of color for her wedding dress. Certain colors will bring greater happiness than others. I have heard such jingles as:

Marry in blue, he'll be true.  
Marry in black, you'll wish you were back.  
Marry in white, everything'll be all right.

Of course, the bride is always told to wear "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue."

When Mr. McKinney and I were married we were presented with an old battered coffeepot by some well-wishing friends who believed it bad luck to start housekeeping with a new one.

There are many stories in the Ozark regions of the "marking" of babies. Birthmarks are generally explained by the fact that the mother suffered some fright before the birth of the baby. I knew one woman who had a red spot on her leg near the ankle. She told me that her mother had killed a chicken just before her birth; the chicken flopped against the mother's leg getting some blood on her. Hence, the baby had been marked in this way. I think that most Ozark people still firmly believe that babies are prenatally marked.

A good many women of the Ozarks think that cats are dangerous to babies. One woman told me that she knew of cases where cats had "sat on babies' chests and sucked their breath right out'n them."

One of the most interesting of all the Ozark superstitions I learned about was the belief that certain people are endowed with the power of finding veins of water with the aid of a forked peach tree twig. These persons are usually called "water witches." Some well-educated men (Dr. F. A. Middlebusch of Missouri University, J. W. Rankin of the English Department of Missouri University, and Dr. St. John of Pineville, Missouri<sup>6</sup>) have been firm believers in this method of finding water veins. The "water witch" takes the forked twig in his hands and walks very slowly. When he is directly over the water vein the twig turns in his hands until the point of the twig points toward the ground. The more capable witches have even been able to determine the depth of the stream by the force of pull on the twig. If the force of the pull is slight, the vein is deep; if strong, the vein is near the surface. Many people of the Ozarks can cite instances of water witches finding water in the driest of seasons and would not think of having a well dug without first securing the services of a water witch.

Good roads, radios, newspapers, and better educational facilities have changed conditions in the Ozarks in the last few years. It is not the "remote" section that it was when I first went there in the '30's. It is, however, still a section quite different from any other section of Missouri and unique in many ways. Many of the superstitions which I have related here are, no doubt, laughed away by the younger people, who, I am sure, have heard them all. There are older people, however, who still believe them.

---

6. Ibid., p. 84.

-----

#### A MESSAGE FROM THE RETIRING PRESIDENT

The Tennessee Folklore Society is a joy to work with. I appreciate having had the privilege of serving as president for the past two years. The willingness of members to serve in whatever capacity they are asked to is one of the things that stand out. True cooperation and freedom are evident both in preparation for meetings and in participation on programs.

I wish to express my thanks for what each one has done in the past two years to further the interests of the organization.

The editors of the Bulletin have made us proud by their publication. The Bulletin is an honor to the Society. I am glad it is circulated as widely as it is. My hope is that it will be even more widely circulated in the coming years and that more and more persons will be interested to the extent of becoming members.

I shall look forward to future programs and the Bulletins. My hope is that the Society will become stronger and better in every way as time goes on.

Freida Johnson



## A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BRAZILIAN FOLKLORE

By

Earl W. Thomas

Vanderbilt University

The purpose of the following pages is to point out some of the most important types of folk literature which have been collected and studied in Brazil, at the same time indicating some of the more important books which deal with each type. The list of works in Portuguese is selective rather than complete, but all works available in English which were known to the writer and which seemed to have any value for the student of folklore were included. The division into types was not based strictly upon logical considerations, but rather was dictated by the interests of the collectors themselves.

The literature of the Indian was, of course, preserved entirely by word of mouth until it was heard and written down by Europeans, mostly in relatively recent times. Those stories which have been preserved deal with such subjects as the creation of the universe; the discovery of the basic means of livelihood, such as corn and manioc; the discovery of fire; and with the monsters with which the imagination of the aborigines peopled the forests and rivers of Amazonia, such as the Jurupary, which the Christians soon identified with the devil. Among the most numerous are the anthropomorphic animal stories. The tales of the aborigines can be found in two important collections in English. The first is quite specialized in its selection, being limited to a single subject. C. F. Hartt, a member of the Thayer Expedition led by Agassiz gathered a considerable number of stories concerning the tortoise which he published in 1875 under the title Amazonian Tortoise Myths. The second collection is found in Brazil, the Amazons and the Coast, a report of exploration and travel published by H. H. Smith in 1879. In a chapter devoted to the folklore of the Indians he narrates about thirty tales, including several taken from other authors, and discusses them as sources of the cosmological ideas of the aborigines. They consist mainly of animal tales and religious myths. For those who wish to see such stories in the original Tupy language, there are two extensive and important collections made by Brazilians. The first is found in O Selvagem, of Couto de Magalhães, accompanied by a grammar of the language. The second is Lendas em Mheengatu e em Português, by Brandão de Amorim. In both, fortunately, the stories have been translated into Portuguese.

The folk tale in Portuguese is found in great variety and over a large part of Brazil. One of the largest and most varied collections is that made by J. da Silva Campos in Bahia, published in O Folclore of Basilio de Magalhães. Nearly half of the eighty-one items are animal tales, similar in style and content to others found in other countries, but showing

certain Brazilian characteristics, such as the prominence of the jaguar, the monkey, and the sloth. Other tales concern monsters, some of Indian or Negro origin, others apparently invented more recently in order to frighten children into obedience. A good part of the tales of this collection, along with others, are also found in the earlier work Contos Populares of Silvio Romero.

A very interesting collection was made in Minas Gerais by Lindolfo Gomes. It has appeared in three editions, the first two entitled Contos Populares, the third Contos Populares Brasileiros. The contents include several animal tales, moralizing stories, and tales of monsters and other fantastic creatures. The collector recounts a number of the anecdotes so commonly heard in Brazil, but rarely registered by the folklorist.<sup>1</sup> The book includes various other types--religious tales of miracles, etc.; stories of the clever and unscrupulous old slave, Pai João; of Pedro Malazarte, the Luso-Brazilian equivalent of Till Eulenspiegel; and the words of numerous lullabies.

One of the most tireless of the collectors is the paulista Cornélio Pires, several of whose works are listed below. The best single work is the Seleção caipira, a selection of twenty-nine bits chosen from several of his earlier works. Himself a native of the caipira<sup>2</sup> country of São Paulo, he is thoroughly at home among them and well acquainted with their speech. He employs popular language and repeats authentic popular stories, but both the language and the tale have been reconstructed rather than copied from the lips of the unlettered teller. The result is good literary caipirismo rather than complete authenticity.

A recent collection of tales current in the same territory is that of Aluísio de Almeida, 50 contos populares de São Paulo. In addition to animal tales, were-wolf stories, apologues, etc., there are riddles and humorous tales, and variants of several well-known stories of European origin.

The folk literature of northeastern Brazil deals principally with two subjects--cattle and bandits. The poetry is sung, or rather chanted, by wandering singers who accompany themselves on the viola, a version of the guitar, or on the rebec, a smaller instrument played with a bow. Some common types of poems are the desafio, a contest between two singers; the ABC, in which this mnemonic device is used in the tale of a fugitive steer or of the exploits of a bandit; the louvação, a song in praise of a prominent person; the vaquejada, a poem which recounts the events of a round-up. All these types, and others, can be found in the works published

---

1. See also Barroso, Através dos folclores, for anecdotes concerning parrots.

2. Caipira refers to the unlettered people of the interior of São Paulo state, mostly descendants of early settlers, frequently of mixed race.

by two folklorists of the Northeast, Leonardo Motta and Luiz da Câmara Cascudo. See especially Motta's Cantadores and Câmara Cascudo's Vaqueiros e Cantadores.

The many religious festivals of all Brazil have traditional ceremonies connected with them which in many cases include songs, dances, pantomimes, and recitations. The classic descriptions of these festivals are found in Mello Morais' work, Festas e Tradições. O Negro no Folclore, of Artur Ramos, also discusses those festivals in which the Negro takes a prominent part. Jose Teixeira collected a number of songs and recitations connected with these observances in Boiaz. His work, entitled Folclore Goiano, also contain poems concerning cattle and cowboys, animal stories in verse, poems of banditry, etc. Although his orthography and grammar are conventionalized folk language rather than an accurate representation of the speech of the people, his sources are authentic singers of the region.

The novelist Graciliano Ramos wrote down a series of tall tales in his Historias de Alexandre. They are set into a conventionalized frame by the author, so that the series of tales forms a continuous whole. Part of the stories certainly, and perhaps all of them, are authentic folk tales. One of the same tales is also reported and discussed by Gustavo Barroso in Através dos Folclores. The tall tale is quite rare in Brazilian folklore.

Little has been gathered from the southernmost part of the country, where to a great extent the folk literature is naturally connected with horses and cattle. Although there is evidence which indicates the existence of stories and songs of the types known elsewhere in Brazil, and of legends connected with the Jesuit settlements along the Uruguay, very little has appeared in print. The principal collector was Simões Lopes Neto, the results of whose work appeared in the two books listed below.

In the field of folk-music, the most active researcher was Mário de Andrade (1893-1945). Although his writings touch on only a few of the numerous types of folk music, they will give the reader an introduction to the great variety of it, along with very interesting discussions of several types. Of course, a great many examples of folk music are now available on records in Brazil. A bibliography of Indian music may be found in English in Mário de Andrade's Popular Music and Song in Brazil. However, very little of the music of the Indians is extant, and not much of their poetry has been preserved. Twelve samples of actual music, along with several poems and tales, are found in Santa Ana Nêry's Folclore Brésilien. The poems and tales are given only in French prose translations.

The field for study of superstitions and magic in such a country as Brazil is naturally very large. A few of the most important works concerned with them are listed in the bibliography. Doubtless a great deal remains to be done with them, as well as with proverbs.

In addition to this material, which is folklore in the proper sense of the word, we find a very interesting body of poetry written by poets who are more sophisticated, but fully familiar with the style and content of folk poetry. The most interesting of these, and by far the best known,



is Catullo da Paixão Cearense, some of the best known of whose works are listed below. A different approach is illustrated by the prose work, Macunaíma, of Mário de Andrade. In it he attempted to form a synthesis of legends from many sources, in order to create a thoroughly Brazilian work.

### Bibliographies

- Andrade, Mário de, Popular Music and Song in Brazil. With bibliography on music of Indians of Brazil and on Brazilian folk music. Rio de Janeiro, Imprensa Nacional, 1943.
- Borba de Moraes, Ruebens, and William Berrien, Manual Bibliográfico de Estudos Brasileiros. Rio de Janeiro, Grafica Editora Souza, 1949.
- Gorham, Rex, The Folkways of Brazil. New York, The New York Public Library, 1944.

### Folk Literature

- Almeida, Aluísio de, 50 Contos Populares de São Paulo. São Paulo, Empresa Gráfica da "Revista dos Tribunais" Ltda., 1947.
- Barroso, Gustavo, Mythes, Contes et Légendes des Indiens. Paris, A. Ferroud, 1930.
- Barroso, Gustavo, Ao Som da Viola. A large and varied anthology. Rio de Janeiro, Leite Ribeiro, 1921.
- Brandão, Théó, Trovas Populares de Alagôas. Maceió, 1951.
- Brandão de Amorim, Antônio, Lendas em Nheengatu e em Português. Rio de Janeiro, Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, Tomo 100, vol. 154, 1926.
- Brandenburger, Clemente, Lendas dos nossos Índios. 2nd Edition. Rio de Janeiro, F. Alves & Cia., 1931.
- Câmara Cascudo, Luiz da, Contos Tradicionais. Rio de Janeiro, Americano Editor, 1946.
- Câmara Cascudo, Luiz da, Lendas Brasileiras. Rio de Janeiro, Cattleya Alba, Cofraria dos Bibliófilos Brasileiros, 1945.
- Câmara Casudo, Luiz da, Vaqueiros e Cantadores. Porto Alegre, Livraria do Globo, 1939.
- Changas Baptista, F., Cantadores e Poetas Populares. Paraíba (João Pessoa), F. Chagas Baptista Irmão, 1929.
- Coutinho de Oliveira, J., Folclore Amazônico; Lendas. Belém, 1951.
- Couto de Magalhães, José Vieira, O Selvagem, 3rd Edição Completa (Biblioteca Pedagógica Brasileira, Ser. V., Vol. LII). São Paulo, Companhia Editora Nacional, 1935.
- De Onís, Harriet, The Golden Land; an Anthology of Latin-American Folklore in Literature. New York, A. A. Knopf, 1948.
- Eells, Elsie Spicer, The Brazilian Fairy Book. Tales retold for the American juvenile reader. New York, Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1926.
- Eells, Elsie Spicer, Fairy Tales from Brazil. Tales retold for the American juvenile reader. New York, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1917.
- Eells, Elsie Spicer, Tales of Giants from Brazil. New York, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1918.
- Gomes, Lindolfo, Contos Populares Brasileiros. 2ª Ed. revista e ampliada. São Paulo, Edições Melhoramentos, 1948.
- Hartt, Charles Frederick, Amazonian Tortoise Myths. Rio de Janeiro, W. Scully, 1875.



- Koch-Grünberg, Theodor, Indianermärchen aus Sudamerika. Jena, E. Diederichs, 1920.
- Magalhães, Basílio de, O Folclore no Brasil; with stories collected by João da Silva Campos. 2ª Ed. Rio de Janeiro, Imprensa Nacional, 1939.
- Matta Machado, Ayres de, O Negro e o Garimpo em Minas Gerais; with songs of the Negro miners and notes on festivals, superstitions, etc. Revista do Arquivo Municipal, Anos V e VI, vols. 60-63. São Paulo, Departamento de Cultura.
- Motta, Leonardo, Cantadores; poetry of the singers of the Northeast. Rio de Janeiro, Castilho, 1921.
- Motta, Leonardo, No Tempo de Lampeão; with anecdotes, enigmas, proverbs. Rio de Janeiro, Oficina Industrial Gráfica, 1930.
- Motta, Leonardo, Viroleiros do Norte; poetry of the singers of the Northeast. São Paulo, Cia. Gráfica-editora Monteiro Lobato, 1925.
- Pereira da Costa, Francisco Augusto, Folclore Pernambucano. Rio de Janeiro, 1908.
- Pires, Cornélio, Conversas ao Pé do Fogo; tales, anecdotes, etc. 2ª Ed. São Paulo, Cia. Gráfica-editora Monteiro Lobato, 1924.
- Pires, Cornélio, Seleta Caipira; selections from several other books. São Paulo, Livraria Liberdade, 1929.
- Ramos, Graciliano, Historias de Alexandre. Rio de Janeiro, Cia. Editora Leitura, 1944.
- Romero, Sylvio, Contos Populares do Brasil. 5ª Ed. melhorada, Rio de Janeiro, F. Alves & Cia., 1911.
- Simões Lopes Neto, João, Cancioneiro Guasca. 3ª Ed. Pelotas, Lichtenique & Cia., 1928.
- Simões Lopes Neto, João, Contos Gauchescos e Lendas do Sul. Porto Alegre, Livraria do Globo, 1926.
- Smith, Herbert Huntington, Brazil, the Amazons and the Coast. London, S. Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1880.
- Teixeira, Jose A., Folklore Goiano, São Paulo, Companhia Editora Nacional, 1941.

#### Folk Songs and Music

- Alvarenga, Oneyda, Cateretês do Sul de Minas Gerais. Separata da Revista do Arquivo Municipal de São Paulo, v. xxx. São Paulo, Departamento de Cultura, 1937.
- Andrade, Mário de, Os Congos. Boletín Latino-americano de Música, Año I, Tomo I. Montevideo, 1935.
- Andrade, Mário de, Ensaio sobre Música Brasileira. São Paulo, I. Chiarato & Cia., 1928.
- Andrade, Mário de, Música do Brasil; essay on dramatic dances. Curitiba, Editora Guaira Ltda., 1941.
- Andrade, Mário de, Popular Music and Song in Brazil. Trans. by Victor Le Coq d'Oliveira. Rio de Janeiro, Imprensa Nacional, 1943.
- Andrade, Mário de, O Samba Rural Paulista. Revista do Arquivo Municipal, Ano iv, vol. XLI. São Paulo, Departamento de Cultura, 1937.
- Barros Barreto, Ceição de, Cantigas de Quando eu era Pequeninha, 1ª Serie, Rio de Janeiro, Pimenta de Melo & Cia., 1930.
- Gomes Junior, João, Ciranda, Cirandinha; Coleção de cantigas populares e brinquedos. São Paulo, Cia. Melhoramentos de São Paulo, 1924.
- Krone, Beatrice, Spanish and Latin American Songs. Chicago, Neil A. Kjos Music Co., 1942.

- Peret, Elsie Houston, Chants Populaires du Brésil; Première série. Words without music. Paris, P. Guethner, 1930.
- Pires, Cornélio, Mixórdia. Tales, anecdotes and modas. 2ª Ed. São Paulo, Cia. Editora Nacional, 1929.
- Pires, Cornélio, Sambas e Cateretês. São Paulo, Cia. Grafico-Editora Unidas Ltda., 1933.
- Rodrigues Valle, Flausino, Elementos de Folklore Musical Brasileiro. São Paulo, Cia. Editora Nacional, 1936.
- Santa-Ana Méry, Frederico José de, Folklore Brésilien. Paris, Perrin et Cia, 1889.
- Stevens, David Kulburn, Latin American Songs for Unison and Two-part Singing. Boston, C. C. Birchard & Co., 1941.

#### Religious and Traditional Holidays

- Bettencourt, Gastão, Os Três Santos de Junho no Folklore Brasileiro. Rio de Janeiro, Agir, 1948.
- Gomes, Antonio Osmar, A Chegança. Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira Editora, 1941.
- Mello Morais Filho, Alexandre José de, Festas e Tradições Populares do Brasil. 3ª Edição, Rio de Janeiro, F. Briguiet & Cia., 1946.
- Nina Rodrigues, Raimundo, Os Africanos no Brasil. Revisão e prefácio de Homero Pires. São Paulo, 1932.
- Ramos, Artur, O Folklore Negro no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira Editora, 1935.

#### Superstitions and Music

- Câmara Casudo, Luiz da, Meleagro; depoimento e pesquisa sobre a magia branca no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro, 1951.
- Câmara Casudo, Luiz da, Novos Estudos Afro-Brasileiros; Notas sobre o Catimbó. Biblioteca de divulgação científica, Vol. ix. Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira Editora, 1937.
- César, Getúlio de A., Crendices do Nordeste. Rio de Janeiro, Irmãos Pongetti, 1941.
- Gonçalves Fernandes, Albino, O Folklore Mágico do Nordeste. Superstitions, witchcraft, rituals, music. Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira Editora, 1938.
- Gouveia, Daniel, Folklore Brasileiro. Superstitions, fórmulas, enigmas. Rio de Janeiro, Empresa Gráfica Editora, Paulo Pongetti & Cia., 1926.
- Irjá, Hernani de, Feitiços e Crendices. Rio de Janeiro, Freitas Bastos & Cia., 1932.
- Orico, Osvaldo, Vocabulário de Crendices Amazônicas. São Paulo, Cia. Editora Nacional, 1937.
- Teschauer, Carlos, Avifauna e Flora nos Costumes, Superstições e Lendas Brasileiras e Americanas. 3ª Edição Completa. Porto Alegre, Barcellos, Bertaso & Cia., 1925.
- Teschauer, Carlos, Poranduba Riograndense, Porto Alegre, Livraria do Globo, 1929.

Proverbos, Enigmas, etc.

- Araújo, Christóvam, Os Bichos nos Provérbios. Rio de Janeiro, 1950.  
 Castro Lopes, Antônio de, Origem de Anexins, Prolóquios, Locuções Populares, Siglas, etc. Rio de Janeiro, Moreira Maximo & Cia., 1886.  
 Lamenza, Mário, Proverbios, Rio de Janeiro, H. Antunes, 1941.  
 Melo, José Maria de, Enigmas Populares. Rio de Janeiro, Motta, 1950.

Works Based on Folk Traditions or Imitating Folk Literature

- Andrade, Mário de, Macunaíma, o Herói sem Nenhum Caráter. São Paulo, Oficinas Gráficas de E. Cupolo, 1928.  
 Azambuja, Darcy, No Galpão. Contos gauchescos. 3ª Edição, Porto Alegre, 1928.  
 Barroso, Gustavo, Mula sem Cabeça. São Paulo, Cia., Gráfica Editora Monteiro Lobato, 1922.  
 Bopp, Raul, Cobra Norato. Ficção da margem esquerda do Amazonas. São Paulo, Irmãos Ferraz, 1931.  
 Cearense, Catullo da Paixão, Alma do Sertão. Rio de Janeiro, Leite Ribeiro, 1928.  
 Cearense, Catullo da Paixão, Meu Sertão, Nova Edição, Rio de Janeiro, Bedeschi, 1939.  
 Cearense, Catullo da Paixão, Poemas Bravios. Nova Edição, Rio de Janeiro, Bedeschi, 1939.  
 Lima, Ary de. E o Sertão Ressuscitou. Poetry in the style of the sertão. Rio de Janeiro, Editora a Noite, 1950.  
 Pires, Cornélio, Meu Samburá. Anedotas e caipiradas. 2ª Edição, São Paulo, Cia. Editora Nacional, 1928.  
 Pires, Cornélio, Patacoadas; Anedotas, simplicidades e astucias de Caipiras. São Paulo, Cia. Editora Nacional, 1928.

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE PAPAOVA

(A Story Based on Some Motifs of Brazilian Folklore)

by

Arthur Coelho

Hackensack, New Jersey

By daybreak, Feliciano had already traveled a good fifteen miles. He had set out shortly after midnight, riding aimlessly, oblivious of his surroundings. For some time he had been going about like this, as though he were under some sort of spell.

The road was an old friend, but it did not bring back the usual familiar memories. He did not look down at the pond or the water greens and the bird-of-paradise plants that were beginning to shine in the

early sun. He was too absorbed in his thoughts even to notice the flock of wild ducks which soared up over his head as he neared the pond.

And still he knew every inch of this ground. Ever since his boyhood, he had been going to the pond during the rainy season to shoot ducks and there was not a cove that was unfamiliar to him. Hundreds of times, after long journeys through the dry mountains, he had quenched his thirst in its cloudy freshet waters. How many mornings, arriving there at daybreak, had he cocked his shotgun and cautiously waded through the water, trying to get a shot at the ducks. And in the summer, too, when the streams and water holes of the scrub forest dried up, the pond was still his favorite place to hide under his decoy bush and wait for the drinking time of wild pigeons, nambús, juritis and all the other things that God had made for the pleasure of anybody who knew how to handle a gun.

But now Feliciano did not even notice the tall pau d'arco tree, which was beginning to bloom and had already dotted the ground with its yellow flowers just at the entrance of the trail that passed the little farm of Pindoba--The Palms--and it was there, at Pindoba, that he had begun first to cast sheep's eyes at Joaninha, the plump, good-looking daughter of Chico Basketmaker, the girl he had chosen for his wife.

He was so lost in thought that he did not see anything. Wedged in between the two great hampers of things that he was taking to market, he let his red pony find the way along the often-traveled road. Lingered always in his mind, pecking at his inward sadness, was that last painful reminder of his wife: "Ciano, don't forget to tell Aunt Totonha to come, to say prayers over the child."

It was this that for all these weeks had been troubling the poor man. Already forty when he married, and getting gray, the birth of the child --Maria das Dores--Dorinha, as they called her--was like the arrival of a guardian angel come to their house to live. She had been so strong, lively and plump--the joy of his life; so that without caring, without knowing, he had begun to feel that powerful tenderness that Nature puts into the hearts of those who create life, the sense of inner joy at seeing themselves reproduced in defiance of time and death.

Feliciano did not reason in that way for his healthy, countryman's soul was like an untroubled radiation of the infinite, and in its simplicity it did not try to penetrate the hidden motives of things. He loved his little daughter tenderly, without a shadow of explanation, as do those who have faith in God; without asking why, he loved her because he loved her. There was much strength and spontaneity in this affection that grew as the child grew, and filled the father and mother with great happiness. But now that the bright picture of her earlier months had changed, the couple's grief was all the more profound.

Dorinha, a little more than a year old, had been ailing for a month or so. She was becoming weaker all the time. Her skin had wrinkled, grown shiny and dry. Her eyes which had been so shiny and black, had dulled, deeply sunk in that sad, drawn little face. The little girl was becoming so weak that she could hardly keep any food down.



"Have mercy, Holy Mother," Joaquina would cry, seeing the child throw up the milk she had just sucked.

At times she was a bit better, and could keep down a little gruel made of tapioca flour and goat's milk, but soon after, she would grow sick again, and with the sickness, the parents' worries would return. Joaquina could not tell how many kinds of household remedies she had given the child. There were infusions of guava leaves for diarrhea, cinnamon teas to settle the stomach, egg yolk poultices to strengthen the chest, honey of the uruçú bee with rice water...Whatever she was told to do, she tried--scapul-aries and prayers against the evil eye, hidden potions, everything.

One afternoon Feliciano brought Balbina, the child's godmother, to see Dorinha.

"For God's sake!" cried the woman as she neared the child's little hammock. "What's happened to this poor baby!" She added, "As I stand here, I tell you that somebody's put a spell on her!"

"But who would want to hurt the little thing?" asked the mother, finding it hard to understand.

"Look, dear, who could it be but Zefa Pitorra, that good-for-nothing from Catunda road. A woman of her kind is capable of anything. You don't know, dear....It is enough that Feliciano had something to do with that bitch, and she would take revenge on the little angel. Why, by this light that shines down on us, I tell you, if I were Feliciano, I'd go to the witch's house and whip that witchcraft out of her hide."

Joaquina, poor thing, did not say anything...took solace in her tears. In the other room, Zé Feliciano pretended not to hear. He remained quietly there puffing on his straw cigarette.

\*\*\*\*\*

No matter where he went, Feliciano could not forget that set, drawn little face, pleading to him from the tiny hammock. In the daytime, whether he was working in the field or cutting firewood to use in baking bricks for an outside oven that he was building--even far away from the house, it seemed to him he could hear the child's weary whimpering. He was agonized, seeing his little one suffering so much without a remedy that would help her.

That very morning, before setting out, he had gone to the little hammock hanging by his wife's bed as to say goodbye to the baby, and now he was obsessed by the idea that when he got back he would not find her alive.

He was not a superstitious man. Since childhood he had wandered through those valleys, often coming across the solitary wooden crosses set up to show where murder had taken place, and he had not been afraid. When sometimes on a moonlit night his horse would take it into his head not to keep on going, Feliciano never had been afraid to dismount, and with the

blade of his knife locked between his teeth, he would start to investigate. It had always been a shadow cast on the road or the fallen branch of an umbauba or some other tree--never any phantasmic apparition. But since the little girl had been ill, he had been like this--sad and full of apprehensions. His anxiety began to dominate his spirit and had taken away the calmness of his life.

"It did seem like witchcraft...little doubt of that." Could it be that Zefa (he thought of what Balbina had said), to get even with him for marrying Joaquina, had had a spell put on his little daughter?

It might well be...Yes, it might. And as he reflected he remembered his quarrels with Zefa before his marriage and how she had sworn: "If you get married, no child of yours will ever thrive. He'll dry up like a shrunken cashew eaten up by the moon. I promise you--you filthy dog!"

"It was that bitch!" he murmured, his eyes glinting.

When Feliciano reached the place where the woman lived, he left his horse close by and taking hold of a bunch of ropes made into a whip, he went to the shack. He burst into it and seizing the creature by the hair, he cried: "Take this, and this, till you learn not to bewitch a man's child," while Zefa shrieked for help. When at last she was able to get away, she rushed out the back door and into the woods, tearing her flesh on the sharp branches of the dwarf trees like a maddened animal.

Later, when Feliciano arrived at old Totonha's house to ask her to go and take a look at the child, from horseback he threw her the blood-stained blouse that he had torn off Zefa's back: "Take this...Maybe you can use it to break a spell."

\*\*\*\*\*

But Dorinha stayed the same, hanging on to life by a thread of hope. Old Totonha had been treating the child for a week, using a branch of rue to throw something out of doors that never seemed to go, for the child did not get any better. Her little neck was festooned with medals and charms, but her eyes were more and more shrunken and sad.

One night Feliciano, who was sleeping in the other room, heard the child crying. He heard the sound of the mother taking her into her bed, probably to nurse her, as she was in the habit of doing. For some time there was no sound from the room, but then Feliciano began to hear a strange sound, as if a body were being rubbed against something. The baby whimpered for a moment and then stopped, but the same noise continued. Irritated, the husband got up and went into the bedroom to see what it was. Perhaps Joaquina, tired out after so many sleepless nights, had gone back to sleep while she was nursing the child, and was hurting the little thing.

But entering the room cautiously, Feliciano stopped short. What he saw was enough to horrify the bravest man: a huge papaova snake with its thick, yellowish body, had put the tip of its tail in the starving child's mouth; its head in the woman's bosom, was draining the milk from her

breast. As it sucked, the coiled up body rubbed softly against the sheets and made the scratching noise.

The man hesitated for a moment. If he woke up Joaninha, she would die of fright. He would have to do everything by himself, quickly, without delay. At once his strong hand flashed out and unerringly grasped the snake by the neck. The enormous reptile, strangling in that grip, began to twist about the man's neck, tightening itself around his arms, till the joints of its body began to crack.

"Saint Benedict save us," screamed the woman as she woke and saw her husband struggling in the serpent's coils.

But Feliciano did not loosen his hold on the reptile's neck. "Get the child out of here!" he yelled. Then still grasping the thing, he managed to free his left hand, and taking the lamp from the wall, plunged the snake's head into the kerosene flame. "Here, take that, you devil!" And the reptile twisted tighter about him, writhing in pain as its head hissed in the fire. In the end it began to weaken, its movements grew less violent, and the six foot body finally slid out straight and lifeless.

Feliciano had won, but he was worn out, and his body was covered with spots and bruises from the constrictions of the snake. Joaninha was trembling in a corner of the room, the child in her arms. "You're saved, baby." And--"That's the damned thing that was sucking out your life," he said, kicking the heap of snake lying on the floor.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the morning, when the news got round, the neighbors ran over to see the papaova, which Feliciano had hung from a stick in front of the house.

"Believe in the Cross," the women moaned and blessed themselves. And those who were married or pregnant, opened their bodices and spat into their bosom to protect themselves from such visitors.

--Translated from the Portuguese  
By Raymond Sayers  
New York, New York

-----

#### REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

The annual meeting of the Tennessee Folklore Society was held at George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville on Saturday, November 1. Freida Johnson, the retiring President of the Society, presided. The program was as follows:

### Morning

Address of Welcome - Henry H. Hill, President of Peabody College  
 Response - George Boswell, Vice-President, Tennessee Folklore Society  
 Folksongs, arranged by Charles F. Bryan and Philip M. Slates - Peabody Girls' Choir  
 Report of the 1952 National Folk Festival in St. Louis - George C. Grise  
 "Folk Songs of Ohio" (Discussion and singing of representative ballads to accompaniment of the autoharp) - Mrs. Ann Grimes  
 Folksongs, with accompaniment on the dulcimer - Fourth Grade Pupils, Dupont Elementary School, directed by Fanny B. Kiser  
 "Folk Crafts of the Pioneer South" (Discussion and demonstration) - Mabel Ward  
 "Some Folklore of Macon County, Tennessee" - Harry Law  
 Appointment of Nominating Committee and Resolutions Committee  
 Lunch in Little Cafeteria, George Peabody College for Teachers

### Afternoon

"Sunday School Songs of the Nineteenth Century" (Discussion and singing of select examples to accompaniment of the dulcimer and the piano) - Charles F. Bryan  
 Folksongs, sung to accompaniment of the guitar and autoharp - A. H. Roberts and Virginia Rice  
 "The Use of Folklore in Creative Work" - Brainerd Cheyney  
 Folksongs - Mrs. L. L. McDowell  
 Invitation to join in the work of the American Dialect Society - Gordon R. Wood  
 "A Projected Syllabus of Kentucky Folksongs" - D. K. Wilgus  
 "A Technique for Classifying Folk Melodies" - Vernon Taylor  
 Folksongs, sung to the accompaniment of the zither - Winifred Smith  
 Business meeting: reports of committees; election of officers; reports of the Treasurer and the Secretary-Editor.

The new officers elected for the coming year are: President, George W. Boswell, Austin Peay State College, Clarksville; Vice-President, E. G. Rogers, Tennessee Wesleyan College, Athens; Treasurer, T. J. Farr, Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, Cookeville; Secretary-Editor, William J. Griffin, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville.

The Treasurer's report indicated that the finances of the Society are in good shape. The Secretary-Editor noted that the circulation of the Bulletin is international in scope. There are 165 members of the Society and paid subscribers to the Bulletin. The Bulletin is regularly indexed in the PMLA "Annual Bibliography." Services and facilities made available to the Society by George Peabody College for Teachers were gratefully acknowledged, but members of the T.F.S. were urged to do what they can to increase the subscription list and thus make the Bulletin financially more independent. The desirability of increasing the contributions by members of articles, reviews, and news reports was also pointed out.

By special motion, the Secretary was instructed to write a letter to Dr. George Pullen Jackson, expressing admiration and warm affection of the



members for him, and their regret that he could not this year meet with them.

The report of the Resolutions Committee follows:

We, the superstitious members of the Tennessee myth and music movement, with to norate around the followin' goin'-away words:

FIRST, to Peabody College, and especially to Big Yarn Henry Hill and Kentucky Running Set Freida Johnson, a superstitious settin' of eggs for moderatin' and fairin' off the weather and making us as welcomeas twin heifer calves.

SECOND, a bogus buggy whip to speed their nags around the country to the assortment of folk singers from the Confederacy and Ohio too, who histed fine melodies entuned in their noses ful semely.

THIRD, a mythological cedar piggin for using their noggins to the paper readers who brought thoughts sometimes deep as a well, sometimes as light as a goosefeather bed, but always clear as a freestone spring.

FOURTH, a folklorish bag of assefidity for winter safety to all who hitched and lighted here to be enlightened, entertained and nostalgicated.

FIFTH, to each of us, as present and appreciated as Mrs. McDowell and Charlie Bryan or as absent and missed as Dr. Jackson, a stout symbolic hamestring to bind us each to each and all to the love of the lore called folk.

(Since the deacon in the "One Hoss Shay" did not get beyond fifthly successfully, we shall not try lest our logic fall apart as did his.)

We beg your agreement,

The Resolutions Committee  
George C. Grise, Chairman

## NEWS AND REVIEWS

"With Sound Effects" is the title of an article in the Nashville Tennessean Magazine (October 26, pp. 12, 14) about Miss Fanny Kiser's use of folksongs and folklore in teaching her fourth grade pupils. The story, written by Irene Bewley, a member of the T.F.S., was illustrated by three excellent photographs showing American folk instruments. When Miss Kiser presented her Dupont Elementary School pupils at the annual meeting of the T.F.S., she distributed to the audience a brochure she had prepared on Some Musical Instruments and Music of Early Tennessee. A few copies remain, and may be secured from Miss Kiser at her school address in Old Hickory.

\*\*\*\*\*

Joseph Ryan, a member of the F.F.S. has asked and answered the question, "Is Our Civilization Creating a New Folklore?" in the Southern Folklore Quarterly, XVI, 2 (June, 1952), 79-91. His conclusions are that we are certainly developing a modern folklore, but that religious myth and folklore resulting from the impact of nature on man have been steadily declining. "On the other hand, the social folklore is growing at such a pace that there is grave danger that the mythopoeic mode of thought in the social, economic, and political sphere will plunge our society in another ... dark age."

\*\*\*\*\*

The fall number of West Virginia Folklore (published at Fairmont State College) contains collections of West Virginia ghost stories and love songs of English origins as well as an article on West Virginia place names.

\*\*\*\*\*

The June issue of Folklore Americas, published under the editorship of Ralph S. Boggs at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, consists of an article by Stith Thompson entitled "La Leyenda." Although Professor Thompson seeks to define rather rigorously the application of the term "legend," he points out that the chief problems involved in the study of legends are the same as those faced by students of any other kind of traditional tales.

\*\*\*\*\*

The International Folk Music Council's Fifth Annual Conference, at Cecil Sharp House, London, from July 14 to July 19, was attended by 170 delegates from 31 countries. The main theme of the Conference was the significance of folk music in the cultural life of the present day, with special reference to its role in education and recreation. A report will be presented to the Conference on Musical Education to be sponsored in Brussels in 1953 by the International Music Council (UNESCO).

\*\*\*\*\*

Attention of members is called to a Department labeled "Down to Earth," conducted by Elmer Hinton in the Nashville Tennessean Magazine. Mr. Hinton invites correspondence on rural and folkloric subjects. The Tennessean Magazine in its November 16 issue also initiated a series of extremely interesting articles by Professor Gordon R. Wood on speech patterns in Tennessee.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr. Elizabeth Pilant, Associate Professor of English at Ball State College, Muncie, Indiana, and Executive Secretary of the National Conference of American Folklore for Youth, visited folklorists in Nashville on August 27. Dr. Pilant has written a paper for teachers entitled "Why Use American Folklore in Our Schools?" She also has for distribution a list of 16 mm. films on subjects related to American folklore (compiled by Catherine Jones of Mishawaka, Indiana), and a very useful bibliography called "It's Fun to Read Folklore" (compiled and annotated by Eugenia L. Hillard of Albany, New York).

\*\*\*\*\*

George Pullen Jackson, Another Sheaf of White Spirituals, Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1952. \$6.50.

Every now and then the reviewer of books is impelled, like the organist, to pull out the entire set of stops in praise of a work. Ever since Dr. George Pullen Jackson's 1933 volume, White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands, first appeared there has been a growing appreciation for the religious

folk music of our country. By scholarly research, infinite patience, and a genuine love for the people about whom he has written, Dr. Jackson has become the most outstanding authority of our times on religious folk song. The latest work, Another Sheaf of White Spirituals, brings to over 900 the number of religious folk tunes published by this author.

Readers who have already become familiar with the former books of Dr. Jackson as well as those who are becoming acquainted with his work for the first time will greatly benefit by the introductory section of this new book. Here, the author states the purposes of his previous books and here is given, for the first time, a concise summary of the religious song movement "in time and space." By the use of an ingenious map and a fine bit of capsule writing the entire movement is given in the space of two pages.

Of the song groupings much could be said. No collection of folk songs has yet been published which did not draw adverse criticism from some who would like to see divisions more nearly suited to their individual needs. To this reviewer the divisions are both helpful and fascinating. The section (Group I), "Songs Which Reveal the Folk Singing Manner" is welcomed; for anyone who knows this segment of our culture appreciates the "how it is sung" as well as "what is sung." The divisions into the northern and southern sources is much needed as this period of our national development cannot be fully understood without such a distinction.

Of the songs themselves, Dr. Jackson has treated each one with great care in his authoritative style found in previous works. In addition there is a warmth and a more entrancing style of writing than found in his other books, as in such statements:

"This is merely a wandering chorus which might pop up at almost any moment of excitement in a revival"; "...a brood of minstrel ditties"; "...wedded the hybrid text to the tune."

In this work Dr. Jackson has felt freer in wielding an editorial hand than in previous works. Thus, there is much more coherence in the tunes given than would be the case if the obvious mistakes were retained from original manuscript and works.

No scholarly book on folk music has appeared which is more attractive than this book. Illustrated throughout by the author's clever pen drawings, the work is a pleasure to peruse as well as to study. It will be a surprise if this book cannot soon be found on the shelves of the libraries of the world and in the homes of those who love religious folk song.

--Charles F. Bryan

Archer Taylor, English Riddles from Oral Tradition, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1951. 959 pp. \$10.00.

"Professor Taylor has listed all the riddles in oral circulation as recorded by collectors from earliest times in all English-speaking countries." There are 1749 such riddles, which Professor Taylor has classified according to method of statement; that is, comparison of thing to person, or plant; comparison of thing to another thing, and the like. There is an index of answers or solutions..."A preliminary discussion considers each riddle and its central idea as it appears in other languages through the world, from Abyssinian to Zulu."

This is a formidable work of scholarship of nearly a thousand pages, which nevertheless makes very good hunting. It brings together all riddles which describe an object in the same way, however varied the answers or solutions may be. There are seventeen riddles and variants comparing horses to teeth; twelve which compare the mouth to a barn door, etc. The bibliography of riddles of all languages is probably the fullest in print.

What Child did for the English folk ballad Professor Taylor has done for the humbler riddle. It is, without doubt, one of the finest and most scholarly collections of riddles ever made.

--C. P. Snelgrove

Brown, Frank C., The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1952. 5 vols. \$35.00.

Dr. Brown became interested in local folklore soon after coming to Trinity College (now Duke University). In 1913 he organized the North Carolina Folklore Society and served for a time as its secretary-treasurer.

Both Dr. Brown and the Society collected directly from individuals--Dr. Brown through his classes in folklore and through his summer expeditions through the North Carolina mountains, and the Society by stimulating its members to collect--and also leaved on the previous collections made by friends and members of the Society. The result was a large mass of texts and notes assembled over a period of nearly forty years and covering every aspect of local tradition. This is one of the largest and most complete collections of folklore from a single state.

On Dr. Brown's death in 1943, the heavy task of organizing all this material for publication, separating it into appropriate groups, and selecting associate editors fell to Newman I. White. Dr. White died in 1948 and Paul F. Bawa was appointed to see the work through its final stages.

The plan of the work is as follows:

- Volume I: Games and rhymes, beliefs and customs, riddles, proverbs, speech, tales and legends
- Volume II: Folk ballads
- Volume III: Folk songs from North Carolina
- Volume IV: The music of the ballads and songs
- Volume V: Superstitions from North Carolina



The first two volumes are now off the press. They are of exceedingly high quality. If the succeeding volumes are of the same high caliber, and I have no doubt but that they will be, this should prove to be one of the most valuable state collections of folklore in print.

--C. P. Snelgrove

Vance Randolph, Who Blowed Up the Church House? And Other Ozark Folk Tales, New York, Columbia University Press, 1952. 232 pp. \$3.50.

In this collection of stories taken directly (well, almost directly) from the lips of the Ozarkans, readers will find many tales with which they are familiar, and probably some of their favorite yarns. Some of them were known to Chaucer and some to his ancestors in the still mistier past. Herbert Halpert, who writes some of the notes in the volume as well as its "Comments of a Folklorist," suggests that the number of truly local stories in this collection is probably very small, but even the oldest and most widely distributed are apt to be associated with names, places, and circumstances that give them the air of being originals. Professor Halpert observes the strong folk tendency to tell nearly all stories as being "true." Of these tales, he says, "They are so thoroughly localized in place and time, so completely Ozarkian in tone and coloring, that the unsuspecting reader might well accept them as local yarns, either based on fact, or ... believed to be true." The relations of most of the stories with their congeners is discussed or hinted in the notes of both Randolph and Halpert.

Mr. Randolph has made no attempt to separate the stories into type categories. We have simply a swell series of humorous anecdotes, ghost stories, märchen, and what have you. And no matter how often you have heard some of them, you will enjoy the authentic (well, nearly authentic) manner and speech of the narration.

It is understandable that Mr. Randolph should have been queasy about reproducing the "four-letter verb meaning copulate" and that he should have blue-penciled twenty-three of twenty-seven God damns. But some of his confessed editing is less easy to accept. Why should he not have allowed his storytellers their chitches and monmixing and woodscolts?

The book is amusingly illustrated by the drawings of Glen Rounds.

--William J. Griffin

Egerton Sykes, Compiler, Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1952 (Everyman's Reference Library). 262 pp. \$3.75.

For anyone who does not have available Maria Leach's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, this handy reference book will be very helpful indeed. Its entries are concise, and cross reference makes possible a fairly adequate coverage of most items the student might wish to check on. But as the title implies, this is a dictionary, not an encyclopedia.

The introductory bibliography indicates both the scope and some of the limitations of the book. It is illustrated by sixteen pages of photographic plates.

--William J. Griffin

Radioplay Service (Box 368, Hollywood 28, California), American Folk Tales,  
A portfolio of 13 quarter-hour radio plays, including the right to  
produce each play once over a single station. \$3.00.

This series of plays would be useful for amateur groups wishing to experiment with radio production. The stories are drawn from 18th Century America and the characters are Tories and rebels, fur traders and Indians, colonial governors and pirates. Many of the lines, and many of the transitions, are extremely trite, but the series is serviceable as practice material for high school dramatics clubs and might well serve as a stimulant to student writers, who would often feel, with some reason, that they could do better.

--Burton H. Byers

Jean Richie, Jean Richie Sings, New York: Elektra-Stratford Record Corp.,  
1952. 4.45.

In the increasing wave of folk song recordings it is a pleasure to run across a surprise such as this. The surprise is to find a recording company wise enough to reproduce a sequence of folk songs "which is presented not as a tour de force of the recording art--which it is not--but as a culling of the best of many performances, joined together with the convenience of modern tape editing." This apology by Editor Edward Tatnall Canby immediately rules out the lush, souped-up radio recording studio and turns us to some genuine folk singing.

Jean Richie, whose Uncle Jason sang for Cecil Sharp in 1916, and whose name has been getting around lately, sings a group of songs in a manner so genuine and so distinctive as to call for repeated playings. The voice is neither untrained or overtrained. It is somewhere midway between Jo Stafford's lush sound and Rebecca Tarwater's Library of Congress recordings.

The record would be distinctive if it were only for the dulcimer accompaniments. Miss Richie plays this instrument with a lute-like sound which enhances greatly her songs. On other songs the guitar is used, and "The Little Devils" is unaccompanied. Miss Richie's sense of pitch is impeccable and her instinctive ability of phrasing is one of the rarest to be heard.

This fine long-playing, double record may be purchased at music stores or it may be ordered directly from the Elektra-Stratford Record Corporation, 89 West 10th Street, New York 14, N. Y.

--Charles F. Bryan

In addition to reprints from various periodicals, the following publications have been received for review or filing in the Nashville office of the Society during the first nine months of 1952:

- Marguerite Cooley and Vernon Parks, American Folklore: A Bibliography, Nashville, Tennessee: George Peabody College for Teachers. 1952. (Mimeo.)
- Lawrence Edwards, Speedwell Sketches, Boston: Bruce Humphries, 1952.
- George Pullen Jackson, Another Sheaf of White Spirituals, Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1952.
- Catherine Jones, "American Folklore in Motion Pictures." (Mimeographed annotated list.)
- Eugenia L. Millard, "It's Fun to Read Folklore," Muncie, Indiana: National Conference American Folklore for Youth. (Mimeographed annotated bibliography for adolescents.)
- Elizabeth Pilant, "Why Use American Folklore in Our Schools?" (Mimeographed.)
- Jean Richie, Jean Richie Sings (a phonograph disc), New York: Elektra-Stratford Record Corp. 1952.
- Journal of the International Folk Music Council, London, IV (1952).
- West Virginia Folklore, Fairmont, West Virginia, II, 1 (Oct. 1951), 2 (Jan. 1952), 3 (Spring 1952), 4 (Summer 1952), III, 1 (Fall 1952).
- Folklore Americas, Coral Gables, Florida, XII, 1 (June 1952).

---

#### TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY BULLETIN

Volume XVIII, No. 4

December, 1952

Published four times a year  
by the  
Tennessee Folklore Society.

President, Miss Freida Johnson, George Peabody College for Teachers,  
Nashville, Tennessee

Vice-President, George W. Boswell, Austin Peay State College, Clarksville, Tennessee

Treasurer, T. J. Farr, Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, Cookeville, Tennessee

Secretary-Editor, William J. Griffin, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee

---

The membership fee is \$1.50 a year--January through December, and includes a subscription to the Bulletin. Individual copies may be purchased at fifty cents per copy. Back files also are available from the office of the Editor. Mail subscriptions to Dr. T. J. Farr; material for publication should be sent to Dr. William J. Griffin, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee.